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SUBJECT: MONTENEGRIN INDEPENDENCE: FINAL RESULTS ANNOUNCED

Ref: Belgrade 825

11. The Republic Referendum Commission (RRK) announced the final results of the May 21 independence referendum at 1400 May 31. Turnout was 86.5 percent. "Yes" - independence - received 230,661 votes, or 55.5 percent; "no" - union -- received 185002 votes, or 44.5 percent. With the requirement for independence being 55 percent of the valid votes, so long as 50 percent of the electorate voted, the preliminary results for independence were confirmed. ("Yes" votes declined by 50; "no" votes rose by 48.)

12. The Parliament of Montenegro will meet soon, either on June 2 or June 3, to accept the RRK results and adopt a Declaration of Independence. Much of the pro-union opposition (the Serb People's Party - SNS, People's Party - NS, and Democratic Serb Party - DSS) has said they will boycott the session. The leader of the opposition Socialist People's Party (SNP), Predrag Bulatovic, has said the SNP accepts the EU's acknowledgement of the results; it is not clear if the SNP will attend parliament.

13. The Government of Montenegro is expected to send out letters requesting recognition soon after the parliamentary vote.

POLT